

Docket Item #9
BAR Case #2003-0316

BAR Meeting
March 17, 2004

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish and Capsulate

APPLICANT: Warren Almquist

LOCATION: 1211 Prince Street

ZONE: CL/Commercial

MARCH 3, 2004: Deferred because no restudy materials were received.

BOARD ACTION, FEBRUARY 4, 2004: On a motion by Dr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. Smeallie, the Board deferred this docket item for restudy. The vote on the motion was 7-0.

REASON: The Board agreed with the Staff analysis and believed that the demolition request was excessive and that this house was a good example of an historic building in the Old and Historic Alexandria District. However, the Board agreed, at the request of the project architect, to defer the application pending an on-site visit to view the interior of the property.

SPEAKER: Warren Almquist, project architect, spoke in support

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

Update: The extent of demolition proposed has been modified and is now limited to the rear non-historic addition and does not include the west side of the existing house.

DISCUSSION:

Applicant's Description of the Undertaking:

“Request to demolish rear two story addition.”

Issue:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish portions of the north and west walls of the rear of the existing frame residence at 1211 Prince Street.

History and Analysis:

1211 Prince Street is two story, two bay frame residential rowhouse that has Italianate design elements and dates from the late 19th century. The rear addition that is proposed to be encapsulated and demolished is a 20th century section of the house and is built on a concrete slab, but occupies the general footprint of rear additions that date from at least 1885 according to the information on the Sanborn Insurance Maps. The historic footprint of the house with the main block fronting on the street and slightly wider than the rear ell has, thus, remained unchanged since the latter part of the 19th century. The current proposal only involves the demolition of the rearmost part of the house that dates from the 20th century and will largely retain the historic footprint of the house.

In considering a Permit to Demolish, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

Because the section of the rear addition that is proposed to be demolished dates from the 20th century, it is the opinion of Staff that none of the criteria are met and the Permit to Demolish should be approved.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Enforcement:

C-2 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

Alexandria Archaeology:

F-1 Tax records indicate that a free African American household was present on this street face in 1810. The G.M. Hopkins insurance map shows a house present on the lot by 1877. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic activities, perhaps relating to free blacks, in the nineteenth century.

R-1 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

R-2 The above statement must appear in the General Notes of the site plan so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.